

# **Frequently Asked Questions: The Citizenship Test**

## **What is the citizenship test like?**

Applicants must answer correctly 6 out of 10 history and civics questions out of a group of 100. The USCIS officer will read the questions and the applicant must answer verbally. If the applicant answers the first six questions correctly, he or she is finished with the speaking portion. Applicants also must correctly read a sentence in English and write a sentence in English that the officer dictates to them.

## **How will the exam be graded?\***

For the reading test, a USCIS officer will ask the applicant to read sentences. The applicant must read 1 sentence/question out of 3 correctly. Applicants should not be failed because of their accent when speaking English.

This is a general overview of how the **reading test** is scored:

### **Pass:**

- Read 1 sentence without extended pauses
- Reads all the content words but may omit short words that do not interfere with the meaning
- May make pronunciation or errors that do not interfere with the meaning

### **Fail:**

- Does not read the sentence
- Omits a content word or substitutes another word for a content word
- Makes pronunciation or intonation errors that interfere with the meaning.

For the writing test a USCIS officer will dictate sentences to the applicant. Applicants are required to write 1 out of 3 sentence correctly. An applicant should not be failed because of spelling, capitalization, or punctuation errors unless the errors would prevent understanding the meaning of the sentence.

This is a general overview of how the **writing test** is scored:

### **Pass**

- Has the same general meaning as dictated sentence
- Some grammatical spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors that do not interfere with meaning
- May omit short words that do not interfere with the meaning
- Numbers may be spelled out or written as digits

### **Fail:**

- Writes nothing or only one or two isolated words
- Is completely illegible
- Writes a different sentence or words
- Written sentence does not communicate the meaning of the dictated sentence

## **The test questions have different answer choices; do I need to know all of them?**

The questions on the test have more than 1 correct answer. You only need to know 1 choice, but if the question asks for more than 1 answer then you need to answer according to what the question asks.

For example

Question: What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?

Answer: Two rights in the Declaration of Independence are liberty and life.

*You can also answer with the other options, liberty and pursuit of happiness*

## **How can I prepare for the test?**

USCIS has posted the history and civics questions and the vocabulary lists on its website, [www.uscis.gov/newtest](http://www.uscis.gov/newtest). If you live in Illinois, call **1-800-321-9511** for the closest English or citizenship class.

**Is there something else I need to know about the test?**

Applicants have always been asked to be prepared to discuss the content of the naturalization application they have submitted.

Applicants must be able to orally answer questions about themselves including their family, job and background. They must also understand the difficult vocabulary used in some of the application questions. In addition, they must be knowledgeable about what is in the Oath of Allegiance.

**Where can I get more information about citizenship?**

You can get help with your citizenship application and referrals to classes through the New Americans Initiative, 1-877-792-1500 or [www.becomeacitizennow.org](http://www.becomeacitizennow.org).

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\* This is reprinted information from USCIS materials received at a CBO meeting on November 21, 2008